Saving Mt. Everest from environmental erosion

2513. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that six world heritage sites including Mount Everest could be at risk from the impact of climate change;

(b) whether it is a fact that a group of experts has urged the United Nations to list these locations as being in danger;

(c) whether Government have considered any steps as its contribution to save the Mount Everest from environmental erosion; and

(d) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) There have been media reports mostly in the international media, regarding impacts of climate change on world heritage sites. Some references to Mount Everest have been made following a meeting of United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultutral Organistions's (UNESCO's) World Heritage Committee in July, 2005. Mount Everest is not located in India but is situated on the border of Nepal and China.

(c) and (d) The World Heritage Centre and the International Union of Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) have not recommended inclusion of Mount Everest as a heritage site in danger.

Working out a definition of 'Forests'

2514. SHRI KANJIBHAI PATEL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether a Bangalore based institution has been entrusted to work out a definition of 'Forests';

(b) if so, the name, address and other details about the institution;

(c) under which order No. and date, the order of appointment of the said institution was issued; and

(d) the time-limit for submission of report to the Government of India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) Yes, Sir. Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment has been assigned the task to facilitate the consultation with stakeholders for defining Forests(s) in the Indian context, and also to submit report to the Government of India for consideration on the basis of consultations and review of literature.

(b) The Head Office of ATREE is in Bangalore. The name and address is as under- Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE), 659, 5th 'A' Main Road, Hebbal, Bangalore-560024. ATREE is a premier organisation involved with researches in ecology and environment. There are experts on forestry, wildlife, forest inventory, non-timber forest products, community interaction and forest policy and laws involved with this consultancy.